



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

a refinement in these sketches which only the few can appreciate, and a breadth of sympathy which includes the many in its benign circle. Let us make the most of Mr. Howells, for in the midst of our vulgar self-conceits and crudenesses, and noisy contempt of those conventions which are the safeguards of letters, and the best legacy of culture, we have got a gentleman and artist worthy to be ranked with Hawthorne in sensitiveness of observation, with Longfellow in perfection of style.

6. — *The Decline of the Roman Republic.* BY GEORGE LONG.
London: Bell and Dalby. 1869. Vol. III. pp. xxv, 483.

THE materials for the history of the early part of the decline of the Roman Republic are surprisingly scanty. That period is neither illustrated by Livy nor illuminated by the philosophy of Polybius. The Roman wrote of it, but what he wrote is lost; and the Greek was dead before the change in the great Republic of antiquity had assumed such proportions as could have attracted his attention. The forces were actively at work in his time that were to bring about, as their ultimate result, the substitution of the imperial polity for that oligarchical rule which had triumphed over the genius of Hannibal, and then ruined the state it had saved; but at the supposed date of the death of Polybius, though the Gracchan troubles had occurred, and were in part at least matter of history, there were no clear indications of that change which was to have so great an influence on all subsequent times. The writers to whom we are indebted for such knowledge as we have of the first period of that change were either dull men of the class of chroniclers, or partisans in the later period of the conflict, or historians who lived so long after the events of which they wrote, and under circumstances so different, that they had nothing like a just comprehension of their subject. That distance in time which ordinarily is so favorable to the work of historical criticism was of little service to the writers last mentioned, because their training and their mode of thought had unfitted them to appreciate the state of affairs in the Roman Republic during the century that elapsed between the destruction of Carthage and the battle of Munda. An Englishman of to-day can write of the great struggle of which his country was the scene during the seventeenth century no less intelligently than it could have been treated by the ablest of the contemporaries of Sancroft and Sidney, and far more impartially, because the political education of Englishmen throughout the intervening period has kept alive the spirit of the seventeenth century; and the English parties of this time are, as we may say, linearly descended from those that acknowledged the lead of Hampden and

Russell, of Falkland and Ormond. The Cavaliers and the Roundheads, the Court faction and the Country party, the Whigs and the Tories, of the days of the Stuarts, are to the practical, political Englishman of 1870, men controlled by the same principles, passions, and motives as himself. He can write of them, and of their purposes and deeds, as he might write of the intentions and the doings of the followers of Mr. Gladstone and of Mr. Disraeli. Hence even the dullest of living English writers on that great conflict, the issue of which decided that England's influence should be placed forever on the side of constitutional freedom, writes instructively. Very different is it with respect to the men who, far down in the imperial age, wrote of republican Rome. They had authorities at their command, but they were incapable of using them, because they could not comprehend their spirit. The difficulty became all the greater when the writer was a Greek. With the single exception of Polybius,—the circumstances of whose life were of an exceptional character,—no Greek, no matter what were his talents or his acquirements, seems to have been capable of understanding Roman history. Even had a Thucydides appeared in the second imperial century, he would probably have failed to write well the history of Rome. From writers of the second imperial age,—which began with the appearance of the Fulvian family, A. D. 69, and terminated with the elevation of Septimius Severus to the throne, A. D. 193,—little aid is to be expected by the modern historian of the decline of the Roman Republic. Not much more assistance can be obtained from the brilliant writers of the late republican, or early imperial time; for they were, for the most part, members of the factions that were engaged in the conflict that closed at Philippi, or sentimental adherents of the “lost cause” of antiquity,—men who kept the old aristocratical party alive in the *salons* of imperial Rome, as we have seen and yet see Frenchmen nursing and coddling in its second childhood the old legitimist party in the select circles of the capital of the French Empire. Had Livy's grand work been spared to us entire, great would have been the gain to the world; but we suspect that the least useful part of it would have been the books in which he essayed to tell the wonderful story of the decline and fall of the most wonderful of republics; for Livy was a partisan, and appears to have been as strongly attached to the cause of which Pompeius was the champion and embodiment as any one of the aristocrats who fell at Pharsalia. Tacitus tells us that Augustus called him the *Pompeian*, and yet that the friendship of the Emperor for the historian remained unchanged. Such a man would not have written impartially of a contest that had been decided unfavorably to his opinions. Certainly we cannot suppose

him to have been a man of higher morality than Cicero; and we know that Cicero requested that the history of his own consulship should be falsified in order that he might appear to greater advantage, — a request which shows that the abundance of material he himself left in illustration of the history of the decline of the Republic cannot be depended upon. Sallust was a hard, sagacious pamphleteer, and a partisan of what proved to be the imperial faction. Indeed, none of the writers of the brilliant age of Cicero and Cæsar can be trusted when his theme is contemporary history. Their works have that one-sided character which belongs to almost every volume or article that has appeared concerning the causes, the conduct, and the consequences of our secession war. In the hands of good historical critics they are useful, particularly as they indicate the motives of the actors in the grand drama; but their naked statements are rarely to be implicitly trusted.

The authorities for the history of the decline of the Roman Republic being such, it is clear that the modern scholar who undertakes to write that history has a very difficult task to perform.

This task Mr. George Long has undertaken, and as the third volume of his work is before us, enough of it has been executed to enable the world to judge whether he has the large qualifications that should be found in the historian of the most important events of ancient times. We regret that a sense of justice compels us to say that, in the point of rare learning, he has not one of them. His other works have made readers and students aware that he is very well acquainted with the history of the literature of Rome's last republican century; but beyond this he is totally disqualified to write the history of that century. His acquaintance with the general history of Rome seems not to be extensive, nor can it be claimed for him that he is an authority in universal history. His mind is narrow; his sympathies, as a rule, are not with the cause of freedom; his critical powers appear even mean, when applied to politics in the largest sense; and his style is so dry and arid, that to read his book, interesting as his subject must ever be, is a painful task. Not only does he fail to rise to a philosophical view of history, but he disparages it in other writers, sneering at the scholars who have sought to reconstruct Roman history from material that has come down to the modern world.

Mr. Long's third volume is a good sample of his History. It covers the period from B. C. 72 to B. C. 58, fourteen years of almost unequalled interest, embracing the close of the Mithridatic wars, the changes in the Sullan constitution, the war with Spartacus, the prosecution of Verres, the passage of the Gabinian and Manilian laws, the war with the Pitates, Cicero's consulship, the Catilinarian Conspiracy, the rise of

Cæsar, events all of which interest men wellnigh as closely as the greatest occurrences of their own times. Yet on not one of these important subjects does our author's narrative throw any new light, nor does he attempt to show their connection with the fall of the Republic. If there be an exception to this assertion, it is to be seen in some of his observations in the war of Spartacus, for which we were not prepared ; but that servile contest was of so strange a character, and of proportions so enormous, that the coldest mind cannot fail to be somewhat moved when engaged in narrating it. Mr. Long considers the war with Spartacus as having been "more dangerous to the Roman state than any of her foreign contests, except the long struggle with Carthage." This is a correct view, and one of our grounds of complaint against him is, that he has not made clear why a Thracian gladiator was able to bring a great nation of conquerors to the verge of ruin, and to inflict on her armies the most crushing defeats they had ever experienced, except at the hands of Hannibal. How was it that Roman slavery led to so severe a conflict, in which a chief of revolted slaves proved himself superior to every Roman general sent against him, and was unsuccessful at last only through the force of circumstances ? The slaughter of so many Romans by Spartacus, as one of the many causes of the fall of the Republic, precisely as the slaughter of a much larger number of the Republic's best men by Hannibal was *the cause* of the decline of the free Italian population, is one of the most interesting facts in ancient history. For it may be doubted whether the barbarian invasions ever could have been successful, had the law of population remained undisturbed in Italy and her dependencies.

Mr. Long gives nothing new on the Catilinarian conspiracy, that most mysterious of all the state crimes known to history. Perhaps he holds it a waste of time. Whether Catiline conspired against the state, or the state against Catiline, is a question about which able men differ. Much has been written upon it, without bringing it any nearer to a settlement than it was in Cicero's day. The weight of the evidence is against Catiline, but we are to remember that the evidence was never submitted to the test of a critical examination at the time when it was given. The weight of the argument is in favor of Catiline, but we are to remember that the argument is almost entirely the work of modern writers. Mr. Long, whose familiarity with the history of the times in which Cicero and Catiline lived, is not to be questioned, avoids all speculation, while his criticisms are meagre. This is hardly fair in an authority, who might at least have summed up the various arguments on both sides, for the benefit of general readers, and have left them to draw their own conclusions. Something more than bold narrative is demanded from such an author, writing on such a subject.